

Meetings with such men, whose behavior was patterned by leisure and education beyond the means of the great majority of society, provided the lower classes with living models for emulation and opportunities to impress the young with the proper attitude of respect toward their social superiors. 618

Another institution based on the family utilized by the state was the pao-chia system. As it was constituted in the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644 to 1912) and again in the 1930's by the Nationalist Government, ten adjacent families were grouped as a p'ai, ten p'ai as a chia, and ten chia, or one thousand households, as a pao. The head of each unit was responsible for the conduct and defense of those households under him, and the head of the pao had to answer to the government for the conduct and protection of the thousand households. 631

D. Economic Role

As the definition of the term "family" infers, it was the basic economic unit of the society. Real property such as land, houses, and workshops were owned by the family rather than by individuals. When disharmony caused the breakup of a joint family, its real property was divided among the constituent conjugal families, each as a new family claiming title to the portion of property which fell to its share. 596

The peasant, artisan, and small-merchant families were units of both production and 596
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consumption. Male family members worked together in the fields, workshop, or store to produce the goods on which the family mainly relied for a living. Sons nearly always followed their father's occupation and seldom left home. Women worked in the home, taking care of the children and turning out the family's clothes and shoes. Where sericulture was practiced, women managed the entire industry from the cultivation of mulberry trees to the weaving of cloth. Food and clothing were allotted each member according to his needs, as they were determined by the head of the house and permitted by the family's circumstances.

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Some variation from this pattern occurred among the upper-class families. Gentry-officials and merchants were often away from home; they frequently had personal income from salaries or business, from which they met their expenses without resorting to the family treasury.

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The family and its extensions in China also functioned to provide security in old age, food or material help to the poor, and employment for needy or deserving relatives when possible. That a son should fail to provide for his parents in their old age was unthinkable. Were the sons dead or in some other way unable to assist their parents, the aged would be cared for by other close relatives or by the clan. Deeply sanctioned by kinship morality and firmly rooted in Chinese government and business, nepotism was one of the most resistant factors to the advance of the modern political, industrial, and business systems in the twentieth century.

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condemnation, redress, and rectification were the mistreatment and beating of wives by husbands, similar behavior by mothers-in-law against daughters-in-law, and interference by parents in young people's free choice of marriage partners. Much was made in the Communist press of the suicides or murder of women and young people, attributed to "the old feudal system of marriage."¹²

Whatever the humanitarian by-products, the Marriage Law aimed at a basic change in Chinese society with two utilitarian purposes in view. One was to change the popular basis of loyalty from the family to the state. The other was to free the Chinese woman from her preoccupation with the home and children so that she might become a laborer in the field and factory. These aims were quite openly expressed.

For instance, an article in the Peking News Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao [China Youth] on the correct attitude toward parents, asserts that under the Confucian system with its emphases on filial piety, parents had the right to regard their children as private property and demand sacrifices of them. Under the new regime, the article pointed out, "children are not the private

12. See especially C.B., 273, pp. 1-8; 236, pp. 4-14; and Survey of the China Mainland Press, Hong Kong, American Consulate, 932, p. iv; hereafter cited as S.C.M.P. The same conditions apply to this source as to Current Background; see footnote 9.